DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 481 843 JC 030 555

TITLE	Wyoming Community College Commission Agency Annual Report.
INSTITUTION	Wyoming Community Coll. Commission, Cheyenne.
PUB DATE	2003-00-00
NOTE	19p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Degrees; Budgets; Community Colleges; *Computer Uses in Education; Cooperative Programs; *Distance Education; Educational Cooperation; *Educational Finance; Family Income; Fees; Financial Support; Funding Formulas; *Job Training; Technology; *Tuition; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	Montana

ABSTRACT

This paper reports on outcomes of community college programs monitored by the Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC). The document covers the following WCCC objectives: (1) Study of tuition rates for the community colleges; (2) Negotiation of contracts and provision of financial support for administrative computing system components and related education delivery support systems; (3) Maintenance of a funding allocation model that determines the funding gap (if one exists) between the Wyoming Community College System and comparator institutions; (4) Establishment and promotion of the accomplishment of statewide priorities for the college system in consultation with the colleges; (5) Approval of all new credit certificate and degree programs; (6) Approval of all capital construction requests in excess of $50,000 for which state funds are being or could eventually be applied; (7) Preparation of budget requests for the operation and support of the colleges and the commission; (8) Financial and audit findings reports; and (9) Maintenance of a management information system for studies and reports outlined in statute. Specifics of the funding allocation model included in the report argue that the Wyoming college system was funded $14.7 million below the average funding of an empirically selected college comparator group. (NB)

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Agency Annual Report

Wyoming Community College Commission

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Narrative

Agency Mission

The mission of the Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC) is to advocate community college education, provide coordination among system colleges, present budget requests, and collaboratively develop reports on college performance to the Legislature and Governor. The Community College System is essential to the civic and economic health of Wyoming, and every citizen seeking access to the system is a valued Commission constituent.

Results of Outcomes

Objective I.A.1: The WCCC will establish tuition rates for the community colleges.

The commission approved the current long-term tuition policy at the October 25, 2001 meeting. Based on a comprehensive, regional study of tuition, the commission implemented a 4 percent per year tuition increase over the next five years. Rates for the 2002-2003 academic year are $51 per credit hour for resident students and $153 per credit hour for non-resident students.

The 2001 Long-Term Tuition Study revealed that tuition and fee levels in regional states (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) states) are statistically associated with median family income. Accordingly, the analysis focused not only on raw tuition and fee amounts, but also on tuition and fees as a percentage of median family

income. Wyoming community college tuition as a percentage of median family income resides very near the mean, only $0.21 per credit hour above the sample mean.

Since WICHE states' tuition increased approximately 4 percent a year over the past five years, the commission has built in similar increases over the next five years. Reviews of relevant information, including tuition rates and family income will be conducted each year, and adjustments made as necessary to keep Wyoming community college tuition rates near the mean of the WICHE states and Nebraska.

Objective I.B.1: The WCCC will negotiate contracts and provide financial support for the college system's approved administrative computing system components and related education delivery support systems.

In 1992, the community college system converted from a homegrown legacy system to fully integrated administrative computing software—Datatel "Colleague." Purchased by the WCCC in 1991, the computing system records and warehouses data during daily business operations so that at term's end data are available for statutory reporting. In addition to administrative functions, the system also enables students, faculty, and staff members access to an integrated platform serving various other educational purposes: grade input, scheduling, human resource management, financial management including payroll systems, academic counseling, online registration and distance education, to name a few.

An integral component of college administrative computing is wide area networking (WAN) and Internet. The community college system is part of the Wyoming Equality Network (WEN) and works closely with the Department of Education in maintaining and enhancing this tool. Effective use of the web-advising component of Colleague directly influences the development of distance education programs and provides access to e-mail, file transfer, and Internet support sites. College system personnel correspond on relevant issues with counterparts nationwide, access software upgrades, download software patches, thus solving administrative system issues effectively. This telecommunications service provided by the Department of Administration and Information (A&I) remains fairly stable at an annual service cost of $30,000.

Mandatory annual software maintenance for Datatel Colleague is termed ESSA (Extended Service and Support Agreement) and is maintained by the WCCC. ESSA comprises 86 percent of total administrative computing system costs. Increasing at a rate of 6.8 percent annually since Colleague implementation in 1992, ESSA cost $342,000 in FY02. Administrative system computer hardware and operating system lease costs remain fairly stable at $76,000 annually. Maintenance for state-owned system line printers is $7,214 per year. Cost increases for computing hardware are anticipated in the near future as software enhancements and software upgrades are implemented intensifying processing requirements for Colleague and support components.

SecuritySmith, providing e-commerce and database security, was a mandatory add-on from Datatel in 2002 costing $17,000 with annual maintenance of $2,800. Envision Toolkit, a

system design tool required for adjustment and enhancement of the Colleague software and its associated web components, was implemented at an annual cost of $64,000. Ardent AccessLink, a required interface companion for Envision Toolkit, has an annual cost of $12,600. Safari Reporting Tool and Utilities was deployed to improve institutional research and reporting capabilities at an annual cost of $19,800. These value added products enable individual institutions to meet unique institutional needs and increase the ability to provide a user-friendly environment for students and staff. Most of these value-added products are complex and training must be purchased in order for them to be successfully utilized.

To advance training and inter-college communication of system users, a Datatel Users Group Conference was held in the fall of 2001. The event was co-sponsored by the WCCC and Laramie County Community College so that users of Datatel Colleague could gather and discuss relevant issues and receive training with counterparts in the Rocky Mountain region. The conference served 107 participants with 23 workshops.

All the products, services, training, and hardware discussed above comprise the community college administrative computing system. The cost of this system in FY02 was $544,206 (36.5 percent of FY02 WCCC administrative budget.) Projections indicate costs will continue to rise at an annual rate of 6 to 8 percent with projections for the 2003-2004 biennium at more than 39 percent of the total WCCC administrative budget.

Objective I.C.1: The WCCC will maintain a funding allocation model that determines the funding gap (if one exists) between the Wyoming Community College System and

comparator institutions. The funding model also determines the distribution of state-aid-to-colleges.

On May 18, 2001 the WCCC contracted with Dr. Burke Grandjean, Director of the UW Survey Research Center, Director of the UW Statistical Consulting Center, and Professor of Statistics and Sociology at the University of Wyoming. Dr. Grandjean examined and revised the funding allocation model because changes to national data collection standards affected the availability of specific information utilized in the model. After extensive collaboration with commission staff and college personnel, Dr. Grandjean proposed changes that received commission approval September 6, 2001.

Data gathered from the National Center for Education Statistics determined that the Wyoming college system was funded $14.7 million below the average funding of an empirically selected college comparator group. The governor and a majority of legislators agreed that the college system should receive funding to bring them to the average of the comparator group (Senate Enrolled Act No. 43 dated March 11, 2002). On March 27, 2002, the commission approved the exception funding distribution. The equity ratio table below describes mathematically the relative distance between each college of the system in terms of equity of funding and thus determines the dollar amounts in distribution to each college.

Casper	.725
Central	.744
Eastern	.754
LCCC	.725

Northwest	.725
Sheridan	.725
Western	.736

Objective I.D1: The WCCC will establish and promote accomplishment of statewide priorities for the college system in consultation with the colleges.

The commission adopted the base-plus funding allocation model to achieve funding equity among the seven community colleges and to secure funding parity with comparators. The base allocation supports the operation and maintenance of the college system. The plus allocation, granted by the legislature to support specific educational purposes, addresses incentive or performance funded initiatives. Approved during the 2000 Budget Session were distance education incentive funds and student access funds.

As a result of system planning sessions with distance education faculty and administrators in the state, fiscal year 2001 distance education funds of $250,000 were used in statewide projects involving all seven community colleges and the WCCC. Accredited coursework transmitted digitally observes no boundaries, so Wyoming colleges compete nationally when developing and delivering distance education. The field is burgeoning with multiple software platforms and transmission media, while faculty skilled at traditional methods struggle to develop technical skills to stay abreast, in some cases just to maintain local enrollment levels. Like students across the country, Wyoming students choose from a wide range of distance education providers. Recently, many community college distance delivery

courses were full to capacity, so the WCCC made it a top priority to increase the number of faculty with the skills necessary to offer distance coursework.

The first conference in Gillette on February 8-9, 2002 served 76 veteran and prospective community college, distance education faculty. The workshops explored opportunities for new distance education courses, accreditation of distance delivery programs, and instructor pools qualified in distance delivery. A follow-up conference in Casper on May 21-22 focused on course development for 31 faculty members. Additionally, institutional stipends were provided as an incentive for faculty to attend a distance education tele-coop meeting in Colorado on April 17-20, 2002. The Colorado meeting presented methods for attaining North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) accreditation for distance delivery programs. Funds in the amount of $2000 per college were made available and used by 23 faculty to take on-line professional development courses focused on distance delivery, and $10,000 was provided to Casper College to upgrade the Wyoming Community College Distance Education Consortium Website: www.caspercollege.edu/distance_ed/courses.asp. The website lists all of the distance delivery courses offered by the community colleges and the University.

The WCCC expended $9,846 of distance education incentive funds upgrading from 10-megabit to 100-megabit Ethernet card interfaces on the Wyoming Education Network (WEN) routers. The upgrades removed "bottlenecks" created by connecting colleges' local area networks (LANs) running at 100-megabit speeds while interfacing to the Internet at 10-megabits. The purchase eliminated slow Internet problems at the colleges and provided

further incentive for Internet-based distance education. A part of the $83,000 upgrade project for WEN routers improved connection speeds, caching, and overall system performance. The WCCC, A&I, and Department of Education cosponsored this project and shared the cost.

The $250,000 appropriated by the legislature for access incentive funds supported several important projects. In August 2001, the commission issued Request for Proposal 0045-J (RFP) for an informational campaign designed to increase Wyoming citizen and business awareness of educational and customized workforce training opportunities available from Wyoming community colleges. A total of eight firms responded to the RFP and the contract was awarded to Kelly Rizley Advertising of Cheyenne, Wyoming. Rizley developed a campaign for radio, air, and print that showcased each of the seven community colleges and provided each college with professional materials for other recruiting avenues. A survey was funded and conducted by the University of Wyoming Survey Research Center to benchmark citizen awareness of community college programs. A post-survey is designed to ascertain the effects of the informational campaign.

The balance of the access funds was used in procuring a certified specialist training program (QuickStart) created by the state of Georgia. The three workforce development programs licensed from the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education (D.T.A.E.) consist of: 1) Certified Warehousing and Distribution Specialist (CWDS) program; 2) Certified Customer Service Specialist (CCSS) program; and 3) Certified Manufacturing Specialist

(CMS) program. These training programs were purchased to provide a skilled workforce in Wyoming—not only for the success of existing business and industry, but also to attract new business and industry to the state. Since October of 2001, approximately 215 students have completed certification.

Another benefit of these technical certificate programs, aside from rapidly developing a skilled workforce, is that they provide 10 community college credit hours, which is very attractive to participants. Many trainees have expressed a desire to apply the credits toward an associate's degree. In addition, due to the requirement that the participants prove a 10th-grade level proficiency in basic academic skills in order to ensure their success, many are benefiting greatly from taking the Test of Adult Basic Education (T.A.B.E.) and the subsequent remediation involved in bringing academic skill levels up. This has encouraged many to get GEDs and has drastically increased confidence and self-esteem in many individuals—proving to them that they can achieve postsecondary academic success.

In order to participate in offering this "just-in-time" workforce training, each college needed to have certified trainers. Enough funding was provided for training of two faculty members from each college. Representatives from the WCCC, faculty and administration from the community colleges, and representatives from the Wyoming Business Council and the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services traveled to Georgia for QuickStart certification and familiarization with a successful model of workforce training delivery. In cooperation with the Wyoming Business Council, the commission contracted for a half-time person to provide instructional support and coordinate training efforts among the seven colleges.

Objective I.E.1: The WCCC will approve all new credit certificate and degree programs.

The WCCC approved two new programs in FY02. A request from Wyoming Medical Center in Casper served as the impetus for the Respiratory Therapy Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree program at Casper College. Wyoming Medical Center had experienced a shortage of individuals to meet their employment needs, and projections suggested that the shortage would not likely diminish in coming years. The Department of Employment in its Workforce Development Training Fund Request for Proposal (August 24, 2001) projected respiratory therapist openings would increase by 58.7 percent in Wyoming from 143 in 1998 to 227 in 2008. The AAS degree program at Casper College was approved unanimously at the March 11, 2002 meeting of the WCCC.

The second program approved was an AAS in Electronic Commerce (E-Commerce) at Sheridan College. The needs assessment for this program indicated the plausibility of increasing demand for people trained in the technological intricacies of E-commerce. There were no data available specifically pertaining to E-commerce; however, a 1998 report by Price Waterhouse projected the value of goods and services traded on the Internet to grow to $434 million by 2002. This growing emphasis on Internet business provided a logical premise for the value of E-commerce trained professionals. The AAS program in E-Commerce for Sheridan College was approved unanimously at the September 6, 2001 meeting of the WCCC.

Objective I.F.1: The WCCC will approve all capital construction requests in excess of fifty thousand dollars for which state funds are or could be eventually applied.

To parallel the statutory language regarding bond issues and revenue bonds (W.S. 21-18-313), the commission standard has been to recommend that the colleges establish a seven percent sinking fund (reserve funds) for future maintenance of large projects. Only one project, the Wyoming Public Television (WPTV) remodeling of workspace, required state funds. All others were funded by private donations or foundations, local revenue, or self-funding. Below is a listing all capital construction projects approved.

The commission approved four capital construction requests on October 26, 2001:

Western Wyoming College

Renovation of Room 1301 to house the Weidner Wildlife Collection to provide a museum quality environment for the collection through new reinforced walls, a new floor, enhanced lighting, HVAC enhancements for controlled temperature and humidity, and a security system. (Funding source: local) Install up to seven (7) hoods in the old chemistry laboratory room 1439 to accommodate the chemistry needs of students as the newer chemistry laboratory is used to capacity. (Funding source: local)

Central Wyoming College

Construction of an Indian Education and Community Center of approximately 10,000 square feet. The purpose is to educate, inform and provide positive influence in the lives of the American Indian population and the community at large. (Funding source: private donor)

Western Wyoming College

The installation of an elevator to meet ADA standards in Unit Q at was approved on February 5, 2002. (Funding source: grant and local)

The commission approved two projects on March 12, 2002.

Casper College

Remodel two classrooms in the Werner Tech Building that serve as a distance education center. The improvements include HVAC, ADA handicapped accessibility improvements, improved electrical capacities, upgraded furniture, and movable technical equipment. (Funding source: local) Construct a three-sided concrete livestock holding facility. (Funding source: private donor)

The commission approved six projects on June 27, 2002.

Eastern Wyoming College

Construct a new dorm to house 58 students and one manager. (Funding source: local general obligation bonds) Renovate existing dorm, including two bathrooms and make more bathroom space available for private showers. (Funding source: operations)

Construct new kennel space for 24 dogs, 20 cats and other small animals and birds in the Vet Tech Building. (Funding sources: local and private donor)

Central Wyoming College

Professional Technical Building expansion to provide office and meeting facilities for Fremont County BOCES. (Funding source: self-funded) Upgrade the infrastructure in the Lander Field Station, including sewer/septic, kitchen, classroom, the boiler system, construct a shower and restroom building, and rustic residential units for economic development activities. (Funding source: grant, with the remainder self-funded from fees.

Wyoming Public Television at Central Wyoming College)

Remodel WPTV workspace to allow for new digital equipment. Funding source: digitization state appropriation.

Objective I.G.1: The WCCC will prepare the budget requests for the operation and support of the colleges and the commission.

Individual colleges prepare their budget requests pursuant to the Uniform Municipal Fiscal Procedures Act, W.S. 16-4-101 through 16-4-601. The WCCC acts as a liaison between the colleges and the Wyoming Legislature. The WCCC prepares budget documents and administers the distribution of funds allocated to the college system.

The 2003-2004 biennium budget request was prepared by commission staff and provided to the commission for public hearing on the budget on September 6, 2001. At that meeting, the commission approved the budget and it was delivered to the state budget office prior to the September 15, 2001 deadline. The budget document is too lengthy to include here, but can viewed at: http//:ai.state.wy.us/budget/00057/pdf/.

Objective II.A.1: The WCCC will report financial and enrollment audit findings.

Audit reports prepared by independent certified public accountants were received from the seven community colleges and Wyoming Public Television from October 2001 through January 2002. Only one reported finding is yet to be resolved. The relevant college has advised they will provide a report on its resolution for the commission when the matter is finalized.

All colleges except Central had clean reports with no findings or questioned costs. Central had questioned costs in the amount of $300,000 for advance payments to REANET Corporation, who filed for bankruptcy protection. This resulted from payments on behalf of Mountain Plains Distance Learning Partnership. This matter is not yet resolved and we are to be informed as it progresses.

Four colleges (LCCC, Northwest, Sheridan and Western) were reporting Adult Basic Education (ABE) funds as passed through the Wyoming Department of Education, rather than WCCC. It was not requested that the schedules of federal expenditures be revised for this year, but the colleges and their CPAs were informed so this can be corrected next year.

Central had a footnote relative to clarification provided by the Wyoming Attorney General on the college's responsibilities to BOCES, which resulted in the BOCES fund being reclassified as an agency fund, rather than a restricted fund. This will be put on the

Administrative Services Committee (ASC) agenda to make sure this is handled properly at all colleges.

Three colleges (Casper, Northwest and Sheridan) had management letters with recommendations relative to GASB 34/35. The ASC has set up a task force to work on these issues.

It is noted that footnote disclosure varied from college to college and propose adding this to the ASC agenda as the committee continues to pursue consistent reporting among the colleges.

Objective II.B.1: The WCCC will maintain a management information system for the studies and reports outlined in statute. (W.S. 21-18-202 e v B)

Outcome II.B.1: The management information system (MIS) kept on file at the WCCC

The WCCC has created and implemented a data element dictionary that serves to maintain consistency in data reporting throughout the system. Utilizing the college system administrative computing software, each Wyoming community college has the ability to compile data from a multitude of campus-wide sources such as financial aid offices, admissions departments and registrar's offices. Some, but not all, of this data is utilized by the WCCC for reporting or research purposes.

The WCCC developed an MIS data harvest program, which is periodically revised and distributed to the seven colleges. This program pulls only the data deemed necessary by statute for state and statutory reporting, or agreed upon by the Wyoming community colleges for the completion of research studies. The computing and institutional research (IR)

personnel at the colleges run the data harvest program on their system accounts to provide the commission with data files necessary for state reporting and statutory compliance. Three data collections have been completed thus far. These three harvests have allowed for analyses and refinement of data element definitions and coding protocols in FY02. Refinements made to the program are a result of collaborative efforts involving college computing and IR personnel and the staff of the WCCC. The commission will move forward with collection of a more extensive array of data elements for use in meeting statutory reporting guidelines.

Strategic Plan Changes for FY03

The WCCC will report on the outcomes of partnerships between the colleges and University of Wyoming and other entities.

General Information

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Other Locations
None.

Year established or year established and reorganized
Established 1951.
Reorganized 2000.

Statutory references
W.S. 21-18-202.

Number of authorized personnel
Twelve.

Organization Structure
Does not apply.

Clients served
Community Colleges, Governor, Legislature, Wyoming citizenry

Budget Information. Use whole dollar amounts. Use one space between the funds and the numeral.

Administration $ 1,492,696
State Aid to Colleges $48,766,372
Contingency Reserve (Coal Bonus) $ 1,600,000
Wyoming Public Television $ 507,652
LEAP $ 162,788
ABE $ 739,704
Incentive Funds $ 475,660

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